Aden

We arrived unhurriedly on the small landing ground at Mukeiras; the Fairey 2 F.s never hurried, but they generally got to their destination, which was just as well because they were single-engined aircraft and the Protectorate has an unduly large proportion of sharp rocky hills to nice flat open spaces suitable for a forced landing.

We were met on arrival by a seething mass of blue-kilted tribesmen led by the young Sultan, Saleh bin Hussein[1] bin Jabil, and the Regent, Sultan Mohd bin Jabil, and the Sultan's father, Husscin bin Jabil. It was my first meeting with the Sultan who was later to become my personal friend and one of the staunchest and most loyal of the Rulers of the Protectorate. At that time he was just a nice-looking lad and I was more interested in the Regent, a hook-nosed middle-aged man, crafty and, I was to learn later, unreliable, and also in the Sultan's father Hussein, a fine figure of a man with an open frank countenance and a charming smile, which his son has inherited. Hussein was killed some years later not far from Mukeiras in a tribal dust-up with the Rassasis, a tribe which lies to the Yemen side of the *status quo* frontier. His death was a loss to his people, to his son and to us.

As we walked forward towards the village surrounded by and followed by a crowd of tribesmen, some cattle and goats were led out and slaughtered in front of us, a disgusting business, but required by tradition on such great occasions. Incidentally, they provided the basis of the meal we would eat later. Quite often in the future I tried to stop the barbarous custom, and sometimes I was successful, much to the disappointment of the poorer elements who invariably benefit by being given the remnants of the feast.

On arrival at the village we were led into a small house to await the final preparation of lunch; while we were waiting for the meal a diversion was caused by a stout gentleman with a fine black beard walking into the room. He gave a general greeting to the company there assembled and his arrival appeared to cause some surprise to many of those present, although I am certain that the Regent was well aware of his

[1] Sultan Saleh bin Hussein, C.M.G., C.B.E.

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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with us and was now returning to his work somewhere on the Abiyan plain. I had no armed escort from the Government Guards. The safety of my companions and myself rested with the Sultan who was fully prepared to accept his responsibility. In fact, if I had attempted to take an armed escort on this particular trip, we would almost certainly have never got to Al Qara at all. The independent-minded tribesmen would undoubtedly have resisted the movement of armed men into their country and we should have been faced with the alternative of turning back or having to force a passage. Not really an alternative because I had not, in those days, a sufficient force at my disposal to overcome spirited resistance from thousands of tribesmen in that tangle of hills.

QUAITI

Both during my term of office as Governor and during my earlier periods of service in Aden I paid frequent visits to Mukalla, the capital of the Quaiti State in the Eastern Aden Protectorate, which nestles below a high hill feature on which stand the now empty watch towers that in days gone by protected the wealthy merchants of the town from bedouin raiders. Mukalla has a fascinating little harbour and the town is grouped attractively round a bay filled with the bluest water that I have ever seen. Viewed from the broad beach outside the ancient gateway as the sun is setting, the town and the hill behind it are suffused with a golden light, and the slender white minarets of the Mosques are a delicate shade of pink. It is really beautiful.

Here in Mukalla are not only the business houses of the merchants who trade with the Far East and Aden and supply the Hadhramaut with its innumerable wants, but also the palace of the Sultan, the British Residency, and the Government Offices of the Quaiti administration. Outside the walls of the town are the depot of the Hadhrami Bedouin Legion and the barracks of the Mukalla Regular Army and the Quaiti Armed Constabulary. Here also is the Bedouin Boys' School, a boarding school for the sons of tribesmen run by the State on the